



FINANCE COMMITTEE

Town of Grafton

30 Providence Road

Grafton, MA 01519

(508) 839-5335 x 1167

www.grafton-ma.gov

2
RECEIVED TOWN CLERK
GRAFTON, MA
2015 MAY 1 AM 11 10

Recommendations of the Finance Committee
for the articles prepared for the
warrant of the Annual Town Meeting
scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2015

Recommendations of the Finance Committee for the articles prepared for the warrant of the Annual Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, May 11, 2015:

Article 1

The Finance Committee recommends acceptance of the printed annual and any other reports.

Article 2

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 2.

Article 3

Finance Committee recommends passage of this article in the amount of \$772,353.00. This is the Town's share of the net operating cost of the Blackstone Valley Regional School District, and reflects a slight decrease in enrollment from last year of Grafton students.

Article 4

Finance Committee recommends passage of this article in the amount of \$57,067.00. This appropriation will fund the principal and interest cost for the FY16 Blackstone Valley Regional School District capital expansion project.

Article 5

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 5 in the amount of \$50,804,305.00. Article 5 funds the operating budget of the various town departments through anticipated operating revenue such as property taxes, local receipts, and state aid. It represents a \$1,834,985.00 or 3.5% increase over the FY2015 budget. The budget proposed in this Article is the result of significant effort and review among the Town Administrator, Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Department Heads and Committees. This process has produced a responsible budget that fully supports all town departments and services.

Article 6

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 6 in the amount of \$1,511,270.00. Article 6 funds the capital expense budget for FY2016. The projects proposed in this article are those recommended by the Capital Improvement Planning Committee (CIPC) using an established evaluation and rating process.

Article 7

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 7 as presented. This article permanently reduces the age eligibility to qualify for certain exemptions beginning July 1, 2015.

Article 8

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 8 as presented. This article will permanently provide for an additional real estate tax exemption for taxpayers for blind persons, veterans, surviving spouses and seniors beginning July 1, 2015.

May 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant recommendations of the Finance Committee

Article 9

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 9 as presented.

This article will permanently provide a real estate tax exemption for taxpayers who are members of the National Guard or Military Reservists serving on active duty outside of the United States beginning July 1, 2015.

Article 10

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 10 in an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00.

It is important that the Town protect the wages of our Call Fire Department fire fighters in case of injury while in service to the Town.

Article 11

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 11.

This article allows the Treasurer/Collector to conduct routine Town business.

Article 12

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 12 in the amount of \$45,000.00.

This article allows funds to be added to the Unemployment Compensation Account.

Article 13

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 13.

This is the annual reauthorization of revolving accounts.

Article 14

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 14.

This article will accomplish three goals:

1. Put in writing what the department is already doing.
2. Brings the Sewer Department within State guidelines.
3. Improves eligibility for no interest funding for the expansion project.

Article 15

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 15.

This article is an annual authorization to request FY16 WRTA funding of transportation services.

Article 16

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 16 in the amount of \$500,043.00.

This article allows the Town to receive Chapter 90 funds as a reimbursement for projects accepted by the provisions of the Transportation Bond Bill. The spending of these funds is under the direction of the Board of Selectmen.

Article 17

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 17.

This article allows the Board of Selectmen to conduct routine Town business.

May 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant recommendations of the Finance Committee

Article 18

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 18.

Finance Committee understands that there are no surplus items to sell at this time.

Article 19

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 19.

To date, bids for the property have not been received.

Article 20

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 20.

The Grafton Water District wants to develop a well on a parcel they own, but the site is not suitable for a pump station. The Town owns a nearby parcel on Powerline Drive that the Grafton Water District would like to lease for 30 years to build a pump station with construction to begin later this summer. It is our understanding that the parcel is not suitable for building more than the pump station. The Town is currently negotiating appropriate compensation with the Grafton Water District. The Finance Committee believes that this lease agreement is a prudent arrangement for the Town.

Article 21

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 21.

The intent of this article is to transfer Hilltop Farms settlement money to the Affordable Housing Trust account.

Article 22

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 22.

Article 22 corrects the language contained in the existing easement document, thereby clarifying the Town's access to the dam at Lake Ripple. No funding is required for this article.

Article 23

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 23.

Grafton cemeteries are not parks or open space. The Grafton cemeteries are burial grounds, hallowed and set aside for one specific purpose.

Article 24

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 24 in the amount of \$10,000.00.

This article is a required transfer of funds from Community Preservation Committee (CPC) revenues into an Operating budget account. This is necessary for the CPC to conduct routine business in FY16.

Article 25

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 25 in the amount of \$90,825.00.

This article authorizes the CPC to make the FY16 principle and interest payment on the bond issued for the Pell Farm property.

May 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant recommendations of the Finance Committee

Article 26

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 26 in the amount of \$73,617.00. This article authorizes the CPC to make the FY16 principle and interest payment on the \$1.1 million bond issued for the renovation of the Grafton Town House

Article 27

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 27 in the amount of \$44,958.00. The funds to support Grafton Affordable Housing Trust activities have been provided by transfers from the CPA Affordable Housing Reserve over several years.

Article 28

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 28 in the amount of \$18,000.00. These funds will be used to restore the original main entrance doors and the exterior boiler room door. This expenditure is in keeping with the intention of the Community Preservation Act.

Article 29

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 29 in the amount of \$3,640.00. These funds will be used to bring back the original swing out garage doors. This expenditure is in keeping with the intention of the Community Preservation Act.

Article 30

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 30 in the amount of \$60,000.00. The assessed value of the land is \$80,000.00. The total purchase price is \$70,000.00. The Grafton Land Trust is contributing the additional \$10,000.00. The Finance Committee understands that the land to be acquired through Article 30 will improve protection of ecologically significant wetlands, will protect important animal habitat, and will connect existing Town and Land Trust properties. No new taxpayer funding is required.

Article 31

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 31 in the amount of \$100,000.00 by a 4-3 vote.

This article provides initial funding for Phase I of the Super Park. This expenditure is in keeping with the intention of the Community Preservation Act.

Article 32

Finance Committee opposes passage of Article 32.

The Town has a multi-million dollar capital project backlog. These funds could be applied toward several of these projects. Further, the Super Park project has not been ranked through the Capital Improvement Planning Committee's process to assess its relative priority.

Article 33

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 33.

May 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant recommendations of the Finance Committee
Article 34

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 34.

Article 35

The Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 35.

The borrowing capacity discussed in this article was created for the new High School building project to cover the State's contribution to the project's cost as required by law. Since the State has paid for its portion of the project, this capacity is no longer needed. It is good financial practice to rescind unneeded borrowing capacity.

Article 36

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 36 as presented.

This article will eliminate a conflict between state law and the Grafton Zoning By-Laws(ZBL). The change allows riding stables and similar uses in all zones with site plan review, provided that the lot is at least 5 acres and certain other conditions are satisfied.

Article 37

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 37 as presented.

This article updates the ZBL to refer to the current GIS-based electronic zoning map for all zoning districts other than Flood Plain, which is defined by FEMA maps.

Article 38

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 38 as presented.

This article clarifies sign requirements for which the Planning Board may grant relief by special permit. It does not change the circumstances under which the Board can grant relief.

Article 39

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 39 as presented.

This amends the zoning map to add a 96-acre industrial parcel at 105 Westboro Road to the Chapter 43D Priority Development Site Overlay District, and to rezone from industrial to R-20 (residential) another parcel of the same owner at 36 Nelson Street. This will provide increased incentives for commercial development of the 105 Westboro Road parcel.

Article 40

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 40 as presented.

This amends the zoning bylaw to incorporate, as stated in Article 39, the addition of 105 Westboro Road to the Chapter 43D Priority Development Site Overlay District. This provides economic development incentives including expedited permitting and access to state grants and resources.

Article 41

Finance Committee opposes passage of this article.

Finance Committee understands that the Planning Board will hold a public hearing on this article on May 4, 2015. Finance Committee will reconsider this article at the May 11, 2015 Town Meeting.

May 2015 Annual Town Meeting Warrant recommendations of the Finance Committee
Article 42

Finance Committee recommends passage of Article 42 as presented.

This article will rezone 65 N. Main St. from residential to neighborhood business, to be consistent with properties abutting and across the street, which are already zoned neighborhood business.